



Caregiver and Eldercare Fire Safety and Burn Precautions

- The fire department number is posted on every phone. Make sure your loved one and all family members and caregivers are familiar with 911 procedures.
- Notify the fire department if your loved one is disabled (physically or cognitively) is in the home.
- If oxygen is being used in the home, make sure that your loved one understands no smoking. Never leave burning cigarettes unattended. Do not empty smoldering ashes in a trash can. Keep ashtrays away from upholstered furniture and curtains.
- Install smoke alarms on every floor of the home, including the basement. Place smoke alarms near rooms where people sleep. Test alarms every month to make sure that they are working properly.
- Install new smoke alarm batteries twice a year or when you change your clocks for daylight savings time in the spring or fall.
- Place fire extinguishers in strategic locations. Check monthly for stability.
- Develop a fire escape plan. Practice it every 6 months. Have at least 2 different escape routes planned from each room and review it with each family member. If your exit is through a ground floor window make sure it opens easily.
- If you live in an apartment building, know where the exit stairs are located. Never use an elevator during a fire emergency.
- Designate a safe place to meet after escaping a fire. It may be in front of the house or apartment building.
- Learn steps to take when your escape route is cut off. Discuss how important it is to remain calm, close the door to the room you are in and seal the cracks to hold back smoke. If there is a window in the room, signal for help.
- If there is a physically challenged or bed bound loved one in the home, review plans of evacuation. If necessary, an individual that is unable to walk or is bed bound may be placed on a sturdy blanket and be pulled /dragged out of the home.
- It is important to remember, **life safety if first**. If a fire is small and contained, you may be able to use your fire extinguisher until the fire department arrives.
- Have your home heating system checked and cleaned regularly by someone qualified to do maintenance.

- If you have a wood burning stove, make sure the chimney is inspected and cleaned by a chimney sweep annually. Do not burn trash in your wood burning stoves as this could overheat the stove. Gasoline or other flammable liquids should never be used to start wood stove fires.
- Portable heaters (electric or kerosene) should be placed out of the path of traffic areas. The heater should be placed at least 3 feet away from upholstered furniture, drapes, bedding, and other combustible materials. Make sure if the heater is on the floor, it is turned off when family members are sleeping or leave the house. A kerosene heater should only be used in a well ventilated room. Store kerosene outdoors and a tightly sealed and well labeled container.
- Make sure electrical appliances and cords are clean, well maintained and not exposed to liquids.
 - Make sure all electrical outlets are grounded. Do not use “Octopus” outlets with several plugs.
- Keep cooking areas free of flammable objects (paper towels, pot holders, dish towels etc)
- Do not store flammable or combustible items above the stove area.
- Never wear loose clothing, hanging sleeves when cooking. It is better to wear short or tight fitting sleeves while cooking. Learn to never reach over stove burners.
- Do not leave the stove unattended when cooking, especially burner is turned to a high setting
- Get in the practice of turning pan handles away from burners and away from the edge of the stove.
- Avoid cooking on high heat with oils and fat.
- When using a microwave, make sure you puncture the plastic wrap before heating. When opening the hot food open away from your face and carefully to avoid burning your hands as well.
- When using a heating pad, make sure that you have a layer of cloth (light towel etc) between skin and heating pad.
- Keep all electrical appliances away from the bathtub or shower area.
- Ask your aging loved one to take a bath or shower when someone is there if they have balance issues or dizzy spells.
- Set water heater thermostat below 120 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent accidental scalding. Or invest in a home health care technology anti scald gadget that you apply to your shower or tub.
- Make sure that you store flammable liquids in properly labeled, tightly sealed, non glass containers. Store these items away from heaters, furnaces, water heaters, ranges, and gas appliances. Make sure that the area, such as the garage, is adequately ventilated.

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